

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a ~~specific~~ target area specifying means for specifying a ~~specific~~ target area determined based on ~~the~~ a body portion of a person constituting an object in an image; and  
an image generating means for generating an image subjected to ~~the~~ a gradation process as ~~the~~ an image processing on a ~~specific~~ target area specified by the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means.

3. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2, wherein the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means includes:

a detection means for detecting the body portion of a person constituting an object in an image; and  
a specifying means for specifying the ~~specific~~ target area based on the body portion detected by the detection means.

4. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2,

wherein the image generating means generates an image subjected to the image processing in an area within a ~~specific~~ target area specified by the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means, which area has a color component equal or near to the main color

component representing the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~  
target area.

5. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2,

wherein the image generating means includes:

a strength value calculation means for calculating ~~the~~ a strength value indicating the degree to which the color component of each pixel of the image to be processed is near to the main color component representing the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area;

an image processing means for conducting the image processing on the ~~specific~~ target area of the image to be processed; and

a color component calculation means for calculating a color component nearer to ~~the~~ a color component of each pixel of the original image as a new color component of the pixel, the farther the strength value of the pixel from the main color component of the body portion providing a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the one hand, and calculating a color component nearer to the color component of each pixel of the image generated by the image processing means as a new color component of the pixel, the nearer the strength value of the pixel to the main color component of the body portion providing a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the other hand;

wherein the color component calculation means calculates the new color component of each pixel based on the strength value calculated by the strength value calculation means.

6. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2, wherein the image generating means includes:

a strength value calculation means for calculating the strength value indicating the degree to which the color component of each pixel of an image to be processed is near to the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area;

an image processing means for conducting the image processing on the image to be processed;

a mask means for changing the strength value of the pixels in other than the ~~specific~~ target area specified by the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means, to a value far from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area; and

a color component calculation means for calculating a color component nearer to the color component of each pixel of the original image as a new color component of the pixel, the farther the strength value of the pixel from the main color component of the body portion providing a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the one hand, and calculating a color component nearer to the color component of each pixel of the image generated by the image processing means as a new color component of the pixel, the nearer the strength value of the pixel to the main color component of the body portion providing a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the other hand;

wherein the color component calculation means calculates a new color component of each pixel based on the strength value calculated by the strength value calculation means and the mask means.

7. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2, wherein the image generating means includes:

a strength value calculation means for calculating the strength value indicating the degree to which the color component of each pixel of the image to be processed is near to the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area; and

an image processing means for conducting the image processing on each pixel of the ~~specific~~ target area of the image to be processed, by weakening the effect of the image processing more, the farther the strength value of the pixel from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the one hand, and by strengthening the effect of the image processing more, the nearer the strength value of the pixel from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the other hand;

wherein the image processing means conducts the image processing based on the strength value of each pixel of the image obtained by the strength value calculation means.

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2, wherein the image generating means includes:

a strength value calculation means for calculating the strength value indicating the degree to which the color component of each pixel of the image to be processed is near to the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area;

a mask means for changing the strength value of the pixels in other than the ~~specific~~ target area specified by the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means, to a value far from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area; and

an image processing means for conducting the image processing on the image to be processed, by weakening the effect of the image processing more, the farther the strength value of the pixel from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the one hand, and by strengthening the effect of the image processing more, the nearer the strength value of the pixel from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area on the other hand;

wherein the image processing means conducts the image processing based on the strength value of each pixel of the image obtained by the strength value calculation means and the mask means.

9. (Original) An image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 6, wherein the image processing means conducts no image processing of a pixel having a predetermined range of the strength value.

10. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2,

wherein the image generating means determines the contents of the image processing to be conducted, based on the size of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area specified by the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means.

11. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~as set forth in claim 1~~ according to claim 2, further comprising an element extraction means for extracting at least one element making up the body portion of a person constituting an object in an image to be processed, and included in the ~~specific~~ target area,

wherein the image generating means conducts, in a limited way, the image processing of an element area determined based on the element extracted by the element extraction means.

12. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein the image generating means further includes an edge mask means for acquiring the strength of the edge of each pixel of an image to be processed, and producing the strength value of the pixel which is farther from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area, the higher the strength of the edge extracted,

wherein the color component calculation means calculates a new color component of each pixel based on the strength value calculated by the edge mask means.

13. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein the image generating means further includes an edge mask means for acquiring the strength of the edge of each pixel of an image to be processed, and producing the strength value of the pixel which is farther from the main color component of the body portion constituting a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area, the higher the strength of the edge extracted; and

wherein the image processing means conducts the image processing further based on the strength value of each pixel of the image obtained by the edge mask means.

14. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 12, wherein the edge mask means produces the strength value for each pixel after reducing the image to be processed, and further enlarges the image to the original size.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A program for causing an information processing system to execute:

~~the~~ a step of specifying a ~~specific~~ target area determined based on ~~the~~ a body portion of a person constituting an object in an image; and

~~the~~ a step of generating an image subjected to ~~the~~ a gradation process for the ~~specific~~ target area specified.

17. (Currently Amended) A program ~~as set forth in claim 15~~ according to claim 16, wherein the image generating step causes the information processing system to generate an image subjected to the image processing based on ~~the~~ a skin color component of a person constituting an object, extracted from the body portion providing a reference of the ~~specific~~ target area specified.

18. (Currently Amended) A program for causing an information processing system to execute:

a step of specifying a position and a range of an area including an arbitrary image in an image; and

a step of generating an image subjected to an image processing in an area having a color component equal or near to a main color component representing an area in the specified area.

19. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 2,  
wherein the ~~specific~~ target area specifying means includes: a detection means for  
detecting the body portion of a person constituting an object in an image; and  
a specifying means for specifying the ~~specific~~ target area based on the body portion  
detected by the detection means.
20. (New) An image processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the edge mask means  
produces the strength value for each pixel after reducing the image to be processed, and further  
enlarges the image to the original size.